WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   A system for demonstrating software programs to a potential purchaser of the programs and for gathering marketing information related to the demonstration of the programs, comprising:

receive means for receiving a plurality of software programs to be demonstrated;

means for maintaining each of the software programs in a locked state in order to prevent unauthorized duplication of the software programs;

sample means for enabling any of the software programs for execution upon selection by a user, for allowing the user to subsequently sample the selected software program, for maintaining the selected software program in the locked state during the sampling of the selected software program in order to prevent unauthorized duplication of the selected software program, and for selectively disabling the sampling of the selected software program; and

monitoring means for generating a code that identifies a particular software program in the plurality of software programs and contains information relating to sampling of the particular software program by the user.

2.   The system of claim 1 wherein the monitoring means comprises means for including in the code information identifying which of the software programs the user sampled.

3.   The system of claim 2 wherein the monitoring means comprises means for including in the code information identifying how many times the user sampled each of the software programs.

36

4.   The system of claim 1 wherein the monitoring means comprises means for including in the code information identifying a category of the software program most frequently sampled by the user.

5.   The system of claim 1 wherein the sample means further comprises means for preventing the enabling of the software program when the user has already sampled the software program a predetermined number of times.

6.   The system of claim 1 wherein the sample means further comprises means for detecting if the software program is being copied during the sampling of the software program and for disabling the software program in response to the detecting.

7.   The system of claim 1 wherein the sample means comprises means for limiting how many times the software program can be sampled and for displaying an indication of a number of samples remaining.

8.   The system of claim 1 wherein the disable means comprises means for disabling the software program if the user has sampled the software program for a predetermined amount of time.

9.   The system of claim 1 wherein:
       the receive means comprises means for receiving the software program in an encrypted state; and
       the sample means comprises means for decrypting the encrypted software program.

10.   The system of claim 1 wherein the sample means comprises means for displaying an icon which identifies the software program.

37

11.   The system of claim 1 wherein the receive means comprises means for receiving the software program from a non-volatile storage medium.

12.   The system of claim 1, further comprising means for unlocking the software program in response to a request to purchase the software program.

13.   A system for demonstrating software programs to a potential purchaser of the programs and for gathering marketing information related to the demonstration of the programs, comprising:

    receive means for receiving a plurality of software programs to be demonstrated;

    means for maintaining each of the software programs in a locked state in order to prevent unauthorized duplication of the software programs;

    sample means for enabling any of the software programs for execution upon selection by a user, for allowing the user to subsequently sample the selected software program, for maintaining the selected software program in the locked state during the sampling of the selected software program in order to prevent unauthorized duplication of the selected software program, and for selectively disabling the sampling of the selected software program; and

    monitoring means for generating a code for use in unlocking the software programs and for including in the code an identification of which of the software programs were sampled by the user and how many times each of the software programs were sampled by the user.

14.   A computerized method for demonstrating software programs to a potential purchaser of the programs and for gathering marketing information related to the

demonstration of the programs, comprising the steps
executed by a computer of:

receiving a plurality of software programs to be
demonstrated;

maintaining each of the software programs in a locked
state in order to prevent unauthorized duplication of the
software programs;

enabling any of the software programs for execution
upon selection by a user, allowing the user to subsequently
sample the selected software program, maintaining the
selected software program in the locked state during the
sampling of the selected software program in order to
prevent unauthorized duplication of the selected software
program, and selectively disabling the sampling of the
selected software program; and

generating a code that identifies a particular
software program in the plurality of software programs and
contains information relating to sampling of the particular
software program by the user.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein the monitoring step
comprises the step of including in the code information
identifying which of the software programs the user
sampled.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein the monitoring step
comprises the step of including in the code information
identifying how many times the user sampled each of the
software programs.

17. The method of claim 14 wherein the monitoring step
comprises the step of including in the code information
identifying a category of the software program most
frequently sampled by the user.

18.   The method of claim 14 wherein the enabling step further comprises the step executed by the computer of preventing the enabling of the software program when the user has already sampled the software program a predetermined number of times.

19.   The method of claim 14 wherein the disabling step further comprises the steps executed by the computer of detecting if the software program is being copied during the sampling of the software program and disabling the software program in response to the detecting.

20.   The method of claim 14 wherein the enabling step comprises the steps of limiting how many times the software program can be sampled and displaying an indication of a number of samples remaining.

21.   The method of claim 14 wherein the disabling step comprises the step of disabling the software program if the user has sampled the software program for a predetermined amount of time.

22.   The method of claim 14 wherein:
       the receiving step comprises the step of receiving the software program in an encrypted state; and
       the enabling step comprises the step of decrypting the encrypted software program.

23.   The method of claim 14 wherein the enabling step comprises the step of displaying an icon which identifies the software program.

24.   The method of claim 14 wherein the receiving step comprises the step of receiving the software program from a non-volatile storage medium.

25.   The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of unlocking the software program in response to a request to purchase the software program.

26.   A computer program product, comprising:

    a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for causing a computer to demonstrate software programs to a potential purchaser of the programs and gather marketing information related to the demonstration of the programs, the computer readable program code means in the computer program product comprising:

    receive means for causing the computer to receive a plurality of software programs to be demonstrated;

    means for causing the computer to maintain each of the software programs in a locked state in order to prevent unauthorized duplication of the software programs;

    sample means for causing the computer to enable any of the software programs for execution upon selection by a user, allow the user to subsequently sample the selected software program, maintain the selected software program in the locked state during the sampling of the selected software program in order to prevent unauthorized duplication of the selected software program, and selectively disable the sampling of the selected software program; and

    monitoring means for causing the computer to generate a code that identifies a particular software program in the plurality of software programs and contains information relating to sampling of the particular software program by the user.